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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 004056

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/20/2009

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [VE](#) [IT](#) [HUMAN RIGHTS](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY SYMPATHETIC ON VENEZUELA BUT PREFERS EU TO
BILATERAL ACTION

REF: STATE 223273

Classified By: Political Minister-Counselor Tom Countryman for reasons
1.4(b)(d).

(C) Laborcouns delivered reftel points October 18 to
Giuseppe Calvetta, Director of the Italian MFA Office on
Human Rights. Calvetta, although sympathetic to human rights
concerns in Venezuela, took a cautious approach. Because
there are so many Italians in Venezuela, he said he did not
want to create "a difficult climate" for them with the
government. Calvetta said Rome preferred to deal with this
issue in a broader EU context and noted there would be a
November 16 COLAT meeting where the issue would likely be
addressed. When pressed, he agreed that the proposed curbs
on press freedom and human rights could affect
Italian-Venezuelans as well, and he promised to take the
issue to the DG for Political and Multinational Affairs.

SEMBLER

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2004ROME04056 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL